

think it is inappropriate for us to come up with a new tax right now. It is going to tax something that has never been taxed, and I think there is good arguments to be made on behalf of allowing free access to the news, and allowing our small newspapers that exist across this state to be accessible to those who may not be able to afford it if we continue to increase. Senator Robinson's little people may not be able to afford a newspaper with an additional tax, and, therefore, I think it is appropriate that we pass Senator Hartnett's amendment and that we leave the status quo in place. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Horgan. We will now go to Senator Will.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I rise to oppose the Hartnett amendment. I just want to make a couple of points. Number one, let's think about what we are talking about. We are talking about the sales tax here, and what the sales tax applies to in Nebraska, primarily, is sales of tangible personal property. We tax a few services. We tax, for example, the cable television that Senator Hall referred to earlier. But, primarily, we tax sales of tangible personal property. And there is no doubt in my mind that this newspaper is tangible personal property. I don't think it merits a tax exemption. I don't think it merits special tax status. The second point that I want to make is that the Hartnett amendment is not a return to the status quo. The Hartnett amendment would establish a new sales tax exemption. Presently, as has been explained, we exempt subscriptions from the sales tax but we tax over-the-counter sales of magazines. We don't tax over-the-counter sales of newspapers, but we do of magazines. Senator Hartnett's amendment would exempt all sales of newspapers and periodicals. So we are creating a new tax exemption here, ladies and gentlemen. This is not something we should undertake lightly, and that is the main reason that I stand to oppose the amendment. As the final argument that I would make is that one of the arguments that irritates me about putting the tax on magazines, on newspapers, is that it somehow inhibits the free flow of information. I think it is ironic that the World-Herald, just this past week, implemented a price increase of 25 percent on its Sunday paper. The Sunday paper went from \$1 to \$1.25. Now if the complaint is that a 5 percent increase in the price of a newspaper inhibits the free flow of information, then there is no doubt in my mind that this coming